

Lutheran Confessions

Apology(Defense) of the Augsburg Confession: Article IV, Of Justification.

1] In the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and, below, in the Twentieth Article, they condemn us, for teaching that *men obtain remission of sins not because of their own merits, but freely for Christ's sake, through faith in Christ*. [They reject quite stubbornly both these statements.] For they condemn us both for denying that men obtain remission of sins because of their own merits, and for *affirming* that, through faith, men obtain remission of sins, and through faith in Christ 2] are justified. But since in this controversy the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated, which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ [which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible], and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with forbearance in regard to matters of such importance. 3] For since the adversaries understand neither what the remission of sins, nor what faith, nor what grace, nor what righteousness is, they sadly corrupt this topic, and obscure the glory and benefits of Christ, and rob devout consciences of the consolations offered in Christ. 4] But that we may strengthen the position of our Confession, and also remove the charges which the adversaries advance against us, certain things are to be premised in the beginning, in order that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, *i.e.*, both that of our adversaries and our own, may be known.

5] All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two principal topics, the Law and the promises. For in some places it presents the Law, and in others the promise concerning Christ, namely, either when [in the Old Testament] it promises that Christ will come, and offers, for His sake, the remission of sins justification, and life eternal, or when, in the Gospel [in the New Testament], Christ Himself, since He has appeared, promises the remission of sins, justification, and life eternal. 6] Moreover, in this discussion, by Law we designate the Ten Commandments, wherever they are read in the Scriptures. Of the ceremonies and judicial laws of Moses we say nothing at present....

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

O God, the Protector of all that trust in You, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, increase and multiply upon us Your mercy that, You being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**
(Collect for Trinity 3)

Word of God: Luke 15:1-10 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

- What message did Jesus teach and preach?
 - The Law that condemns sin. Luke 13:5 "Unless you repent, you too will all perish."
 - The Gospel that is good news of forgiveness. Luke 4:43 "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God"
 - Summary Luke 11:32 and Luke 4:18-19
- Why did the tax collectors and "sinners" gather around to hear him?
- What did these Pharisees and teachers of the Old Testament believe? (Read Luke 16:15, and Luke 11:37-54)
- Why did the Pharisees and teachers of the Old Testament mutter, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them?"
- The parts of both parables.
 - Something is lost
 - The owner goes looking for it.
 - The owner who finds the lost sheep/lost coin, says to those around, "Rejoice with me."
- What was Jesus trying to teach the Pharisees?
 - Read Luke 19:1-10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (v.10).
 - "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31)
- All the company of heaven rejoices, but the Pharisees and teachers of the Old Testament mutter. See Luke 7:29-35, "We played the flute for you and you did not dance; we sang a dirge and you did not cry."

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn #249, st. 1-2
1st Commandment & meaning, p. 300
St. Luke 15:2

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses
"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise
"Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia." p.225

Reading
St. Luke 15:1-10 (back)

Hymn
"Your Table I Approach" #249

Catechesis on... (back)
St. Luke 15:1-10
Liturgy
Catechism

--prayer based on reading
+ Recite Word by Word insert
Ten Commandments
Lord's Prayer
Apostles' Creed
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
Matthew 28:19
Mark 16:16
Confession & Absolution
John 20:22-23
Sacrament of the Altar
Words of Institution

Collect of the Day
--prayer based on reading
R. AMEN
Benediction
R. AMEN

Catechesis on Luke 15:1-10

1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ 7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

8 Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ 10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (NKJV)

Of the Law and the Gospel.

AFFIRMATIVA. Pure Doctrine of God’s Word.

2] 1. We believe, teach, and confess that **the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light**, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, **the Word of God is rightly divided**.

3] 2. We believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproveth everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will.

4] 3. For this reason, then, everything that reproveth sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the Law.

5] 4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, is to believe, namely, that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him,

without any merit of his [no merit of the sinner intervening], forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

6] 5. But since **the term Gospel is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures**, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach, and confess that if by the term Gospel is understood the entire doctrine of Christ which He proposed in His ministry, as also did His apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1, 15; Acts 20, 21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.

7] 6. But if the Law and the Gospel, likewise also Moses himself [as] a teacher of the Law and Christ as a preacher of the Gospel are **contrasted with one another**, we believe, teach, and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but comforts consciences against the terrors of the Law, points alone to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the lovely preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ’s merit.

8] 7. As to the revelation of sin, because **the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright**, but either become **presumptuous hypocrites** [who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness] as the Pharisees, or **despair like Judas**, Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually, Matt. 5, 21ff ; Rom. 7, 14. And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners [Rom. 1, 18], how great it is; by this means they are directed [sent back] to the Law, and then first learn from it to know aright their sins—a knowledge which Moses never could have forced out of them.... (FC Ep, Article V).

Justification: The Chief Article.

6] This article concerning justification by faith (as the Apology says) is **the chief article in the entire Christian doctrine**, without which no poor conscience can have any firm consolation, or can truly know the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: If this only article remains pure on the battlefield, the Christian Church also remains pure, and in goodly harmony and without any sects; **but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted”** (FC SD Art III).

Catechesis On Luke 15:1-10



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The First Commandment

The Law and the Gospel

--“We believe, teach, and confess that, strictly speaking, **the Law is a divine doctrine which teaches what is right and God-pleasing and which condemns everything that is sinful and contrary to God’s will.**

Therefore everything which condemns sin is and belongs to the proclamation of the law.

--But **the Gospel**, strictly speaking, is the kind of doctrine **that teaches what a man** who has not kept the law and is condemned by it **should believe, namely, that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man’s merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins, the ‘righteousness that avails before God,’ and eternal life”** (FC, Ep, V).

The Purpose of the Law (after the Fall)

--“For **the law always accuses**(*lex semper accusat*) **and terrifies consciences.** It does not justify, because a conscience terrified by the law flees before God’s judgment” (Ap, IV, 38)

--“Therefore, the Ten Commandments do not by themselves make us Christians, for God’s wrath and displeasure still remain on us because **we cannot fulfill his demands.**” (LC, II, 68)

--Romans 3:20 “...for by the law is the **knowledge of sin.**”

--Acts 20:21 “...testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, **repentance toward God** and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

--“Hence, because of the desires of the flesh the truly believing, **elect, and reborn children of God** require in this life not only the daily teaching and admonition, warning and threatening of the law, but frequently the punishment of the law as well, to egg them on so that they follow the Spirit of God, as it is written, ‘It is good for me that I was afflicted that I might learn thy statutes’ (Ps. 119:71)” (FC SD VI 9).

The One True God

The one true God is **the Triune God:** The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. John 5:23, “All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” John 8:19b, “Jesus answered, ‘You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.’”

The Command: Trust in God

--“We should **fear, love, and trust** in God above all things.” “A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. As I have often said, **the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol....** In other words: ‘Whatever good thing you lack, look to me for it and seek it from me, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, come and cling to me. I am the one who will satisfy you and help you out of every need. Only let **your heart** cling to no one else’” (LC, I, 2-4).

Trust or Faith

--Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And **lean not on your own understanding.**” Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of **things hoped for**, the evidence of **things not seen.**”

--James 2:18b-19 “...I will show you my faith **by my works.**”

--Hebrews 11:6 “But **without faith it is impossible to please Him**, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

“We should fear and love God so that...”

--Matthew 22:37 “Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”

--Romans 13:10b “...**Love** is the fulfillment of the law.”

--Psalm 33:8 “Let all the earth **fear** the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world **stand in awe** of Him.”

--Proverbs 8:13 “The **fear** of the Lord is **to hate evil.**”

--Matthew 10:28 “And do not **fear** those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. **But rather fear Him** who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

The Prohibition: “You shall have no other gods.”

--2 Corinthians 6:14-15 “**Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?”

--1 Corinthians 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, **flee from idolatry.**”

--Isaiah 42:8 “I am the Lord, that is My name; **And My glory I will not give to another**, Nor My praise to carved images.

⁴⁹ It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. **Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessing**; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers.

⁵³ In speaking of justifying faith, therefore, we must remember that these three elements always belong together: the promise itself, the fact that the promise is free, and the merits of Christ as the price and propitiation. The promise is accepted by faith; the fact that it is free excludes our merits and shows that the blessing is offered only by mercy; the merits of Christ are the price because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins. ⁵⁴ **Scripture contains many pleas for mercy, and the holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy.** ⁵⁵ **And so at every mention of mercy we must remember that this requires faith, which accepts the promise of mercy.** Similarly, at every mention of faith we are also thinking of its object, the promised mercy. ⁵⁶ For faith does not justify or save because it is a good work in itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy.